

**Town of Wethersfield Conservation Commission**  
**Minutes of the February 12, 2014 Meeting**  
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Chairman Pro Tem Rick Doran called the meeting to order at 7:19 PM in the Town Hall Conference Room, which was attended by Commissioners Bill Knapp, Linda Neilson, Ralph Moyer, and Rebecca Zaliznock. Also in attendance was Kathy Bagley, Director of the Parks and Recreation Department.

**I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The Minutes for December 11, 2013 were reviewed and on a Motion by B. Knapp, Seconded by L. Neilson, and approved unanimously.

**II. OLD BUSINESS**

- a. Ms. Bagley stated the Town Engineering Department will assist the Commission with entering the Open Space Inventory information into the Town's current GIS database. Ms. Bagley will contact Chairman Baldoni to retrieve the information sheets previously compiled by the Commission, and will pass the information onto the Engineering Department.
- b. R. Doran invited Town resident Jim Woodworth to the March meeting to present information related to a program that allows the Town to identify *prime farmland* (land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing crops) or *locally important soils* (soils with slightly more limitations for agriculture such as surface stones, but is vital to farm operations). Mr. Woodworth will be providing Commission members with some information prior to the meeting.
- c. R. Moyer initiated a discussion related to Open Space funding and the need to have a bond available to purchase desirable land that may become available. The Commission discussed the need to review the Open Space Inventory and prioritize land using the criteria we developed a few years ago, and presenting our recommendations to the Town Council.

**III. NEW BUSINESS**

B. Knapp announced that he was recently appointed to the Town Charter Review Commission, which is required every 10 years. The review presents an opportunity for the Conservation Commission to recommend changes to the language of Article II, which lists the Powers and Duties as follows:

*§10-7 The Conservation Commission shall conduct researches into the utilization and possible utilization of land areas of the Town and may coordinate the activities of unofficial bodies organized for similar purposes and may advertise, prepare and distribute books, maps, charts, plans and pamphlets as necessary for its purposes. It shall keep an index of all open areas, publicly or privately owned, including open marshlands, swamps and other wetlands, for the purpose of obtaining information on the proper use of such areas and may, from time to time, recommend to the Planning and Zoning Commission plans and programs for the development and use of such areas, which may include the acquisition of conservation easements.*

The Commissioners discussed possible changes that could require the Planning and Zoning Commission, the Town Council, the Inland Wetlands and Watercourse Commission, etc. to inform the Commission of any development of all publicly or privately owned open areas; allowing the Commission a chance to review and comment. Mr. Knapp said a Public Hearing is scheduled for February 27, 2014, but K. Bagley will find out if the Town Manager will be soliciting comments from all Town Commissions. The members agreed to discuss this issue further at upcoming meetings. According to Mr. Knapp, the Charter Review Commission's goal is to have the Charter approval ready as a Referendum on the November 2014 ballot.

Chairman Pro Tem Duran adjourned the meeting at 8:30 PM, so moved by B. Knapp and seconded by R. Moyer.

Respectfully submitted by

Rebecca M. Zaliznock